

PART IV: Appendices

(2) Presidential Initiatives

**Children's Administration
Department of Social and Health Services**

05-09 Child and Family Services Plan: Presidential Initiatives

Responsible Fatherhood, Healthy Marriage

Children's Administration (CA) efforts to involve fathers in planning for their children are increasing as we intensify relative searches and promote family decision making meetings. Regions have tailored approaches to involving fathers to their local communities, and have formed a variety of alliances and collaborations.

Region 6, serving an eclectic urban and rural southwest Washington, is one of two project sites for the Fatherhood in the Child Welfare System Project, a three year Stuart Foundation grant that seeks to:

- identify and eliminate barriers to engaging and involving fathers in their children's lives in the child welfare system;
- develop father-friendly policies and practice;
- provide training and motivation to assist child welfare workers to engage and involve fathers;
- develop research-based assessment instruments to determine progress in engaging and involving fathers; and
- develop tools and training for the child welfare system nationwide to engage and involve fathers in their children's lives.

The grant's second site is with San Mateo County Human Services Agency, California.

The project was initiated in July, 2002 with training for social workers and supervisors on how to increase father involvement in child welfare cases. Focus groups were held with CA staff and stakeholders regarding the reasons for lack of father involvement in child welfare activities. Four offices within Region 6 (Vancouver, Centralia, Olympia and Shelton) assembled steering committees with community representation to implement local initiatives to meet the goals outlined above. Local action to date includes:

- Fatherhood Kick off conference in Vancouver;
- training to all of the offices on how to engage fathers;
- three father support/education groups;
- a fatherhood conference in Olympia;
- a fatherhood community assessment in Centralia;
- a fatherhood essay writing contest in Shelton;

- four fatherhood parenting class programs in Olympia, Centralia and Shelton;
- a fatherhood website in Olympia;
- “Engaging fathers” workshops at Reasonable Efforts Symposiums in Seattle and Olympia; and
- participation in the statewide fatherhood initiative group through the Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

The Office of Children’s Administration Research is conducting an evaluation of the project as part of the Stuart Foundation grant.

Region 2, serving central and southeast Washington, is partnering with Region 6 to bring Jerry Tello, a nationally recognized expert from the National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute, to six one-day trainings in July – September 2004 addressing the identification, assessment, engagement, involvement and support of fathers whose children are involved with CA.

Region 2 anticipates local efforts to engage fathers will be designed following Mr. Tello’s training.

Additional CA support for fatherhood involvement comes via participation on the Family Violence Option Advisory Committee. This committee’s focus is the review of issues related to Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) in its current configuration, as well as future TANF re-authorization and implementation issues, and how these issues may affect family violence victims.

During the last year, a subcommittee on “Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood” reviewed the eligible activities should federal grant funds become available, and developed screening criteria for the Department to consider when it reviews proposals. These criteria included “pros and cons” related to each type of activity. The subcommittee recommended that all reviews of applications should verify that any of the “con” listed by the committee for each eligible activity had been adequately addressed by the applicant.

The committee conducted several information exchange meetings, including a briefing for Department management on the federal initiatives. The committee also met with several fatherhood programs and private non-profit programs that focus on issues related to marriage and families.

Efforts to promote fatherhood involvement also come from the Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (WCPCAN). Organized in the early 1980s to lead Washington State's efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect and to encourage and support effective community prevention efforts, as the state's identified lead agency for child abuse prevention, WCPCAN receives federal funding under the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program. WCPCAN is an office of the Governor and a freestanding public agency with administrative ties to DSHS through an interagency agreement. CA has a representative on the 14-member citizen-led council.

In 02-03, WCPCAN launched a statewide fatherhood initiative with funding provided by one of its partners, the Washington State Head Start State Collaboration Project. The goal of the initiative, which has evolved into the Washington State Fatherhood Coalition, is to promote programs and policies that help fathers and father figures establish and maintain positive relationships with their children, provide emotional and financial support, and develop responsible parenting skills. WCPCAN funds supported further development of this initiative in 03-04. Significant funds awarded by WCPCAN in its 03-04 grant program will continue over the next two years to help embed the work of the fathering initiative in community-based programs.

In 04-05, WCPCAN will initiate a research-based, outcome-focused Marriage Strengthening Initiative focused on families with young children with disabilities and special health care needs. The Washington State Father's Network and Mary Bridge Children's Hospital will assist in developing this effort.

WCPCAN continues to support the federal Community and Faith-based Initiative through active outreach to and partnership with faith-based organizations in all its public awareness and education efforts, and by including faith based organizations among those eligible to seek funding in its grant making program.

Faith Based and Community Initiatives

Faith Based Child Placing Agencies

Many child placing agencies CA contracts with, such as Catholic Community Services and Lutheran Social Services, are faith based organizations.

Sally's House

Children's Administration in Region I, Spokane, celebrated the two year anniversary with the Salvation Army, contractor for Sally's House, in May of 2004. Sally's House continues to serve as the region's singular emergency receiving center, providing no-decline, immediate placement response, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week receiving care services in a facility-based setting to latency age children who enter out of home care. One of the many attractions of Sally's House is that it can accept sibling groups that would otherwise be separated. Sally's House services include:

- room, board, clothing and personal incidentals;
- initial needs assessment for children to include speech/language development, special dietary/feeding needs, behavioral concerns, immediate health concerns, and dental/vision;
- collaboration with social work and Pre-Passport Screen staff to determine the need for more comprehensive evaluations or services;
- discharge summary information used to determine the most appropriate family foster care placement for a child;
- respite services for children who cannot be supported in traditional respite placements due to their need for higher levels of supervision and intervention;
- recreational and social supports to include field trips and program activities; and
- provision of family visitation area and visit supervision as needed.

Community Collaborations

Numerous sites have collaborative volunteer efforts that provide funds for "extras" for children in foster care, such as music lessons, prom dresses, camp fees, and tutoring.

Two sites in Washington (Whatcom County and Spokane) are Service Integration pilots which coordinate DSHS agencies that provide services to children and families in addition to other public agencies and community based private agencies. When a family contacts one of these sites for services, any agency that is or would potentially be providing services to the family would come together to provide integrated services. Two of the sites within Whatcom County, (Kendall and Blaine) are rural communities.

Positive Youth Development

CA's support of positive youth development is centered in our Chafee program, described in detail in Chapter 6 of our Strategic Plan, which is in section III (1) of this Child and Family Services Plan.

As the Independent Living Program Provider for Region 3, Youthnet provides services to youth, age 16-23. In addition to the "traditional" independent living services, one Youthnet program involves foster children talking to public school teachers about the needs of foster children.

Another Youthnet effort is their young parent program for both DCFS and non-DCFS clients. In addition to receiving Independent Living Services, parents can attend weekly parenting classes.

Local office staff also support positive youth development with site specific unique programs. For example, the adolescent unit in Everett raised money through private agencies, bake sales and an auction to send more than 20 youth to summer camp. One Sky Valley staff uses "Foster Success Youth Conferences" for youth ages 14-18 in out-of-home care. With Foster Success conferences, youth are responsible for deciding on what goals he or she wants to pursue, who they want at "their" meeting, and the social worker and/or private agency case manager becomes part of the team, not the facilitator. The conference is coordinated and led by a neutral facilitator. They last two hours and may be a one time only event or ongoing, depending on what the youth wants.